

Synopsis

In my thesis, Dichotomies Reconciled. The work of Dylan Thomas, I concern myself with the main three aspects of Dylan's art. Of these three aspects, the one concerning the structure of Dylan's universe is the most important, and, consequently, that to which I have given the heaviest weight. The second aspect is that which has given rise to the idea of the solipsistic Dylan Thomas; it is his concern with his own works, his metafiction. Finally, the third aspect with which I deal, is that covering Dylan's imagery.

In the first chapter, entitled "Works on Emanation," I offer my analyses of the poems "I see the boys of summer," "A process in the weather of the heart," "Before I knocked," "The force that through the green fuse," "My hero bares his nerves," "And death shall have no dominion," "After the funeral," "A refusal to mourn the death, by fire, of a child in London," and "Ceremony after a fire raid," here represented in the order in which they appear in Collected Poems, and finally the early short story of "The Visitor."

These analyses show the circle of life in Dylan's universe. This circle portrays the *dylanesque* interdependence of destruction and creation, death and birth. This dichotomy, the dichotomy of dichotomies, is reconciled in the pool of life.

It is from the pool of life that life emanates upon creation or birth, while destruction or death is an emanation back into the pool. This cyclical movement provides the argument for Dylan's concern with destruction and death. For creation depends on destruction. Conception and birth depend on death.

Death, then, plays a central part in the circle of life, a part which is exactly as important as conception and birth. Also, during the period away from the pool of life, the period to which I refer as simply "life" in the chapter of "Carpe Diem," the notion of death and the

livings' awareness of their mortality, their recognition of death as part of life play a part which is at the heart of Dylan's universe. Thus, the works of the *carpe diem* deal with what I have called the temporariness of life. Moreover, finding their argument in the pool of life in which all life forms originate, these works of the *carpe diem* also treat the union between man and nature, yet another dichotomy reconciled. In short, these are the works in which Dylan celebrates life in all its aspects, which I demonstrate with my analyses of the poems "Fern Hill," "Poem in October," and "Do Not Go Gentle into that good night;" as well as the short story "The Peaches" and Dylan's piece of drama "Under Milk Wood."

I analyse the poems "Especially when the October wind," "I, in my intricate image," and "The spire cranes," as well as the short story "The Orchards" in the chapter on Dylan's works on creation. These works show the element of Dylan's art which has given him the reputation of being solipsistic. Whenever Dylan engages himself in the field of creation and uses this as his theme, the resulting work may be interpreted as a piece of metafiction. The biblical passage, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,"¹ is thus central, for it demonstrates the creative powers of the word, which is the poet's material.

Finally, in my chapter entitled "The Holy Metaphor" I treat the problem of dealing with holy subject matter - for an atheistic pantheist. The solution to this problem is the use of holy imagery, imagery which is collected from the Bible. Through my analyses of the poems "Vision and prayer" and "Holy spring," I demonstrate how Dylan uses the Bible as a source of a common frame of reference, which provides the aid he needs in order to communicate his message of his perception of the world, his universe.

An aspect that pervades my paper is the confrontation with the general perceptions of Dylan as either a Romantic, Neo-romantic, Surrealist or even an Anglo-Welsh writer. Any attempt

¹"John" 1:1.

to categorize Dylan as being either one is too crude. At times, he is Surreal. At other times he is (Neo-)Romantic. And at yet other times, he can be best described as an Anglo-Welsh writer, though I strongly object to that term and its definition. At times, he even shows some of the characteristics of the later Post-modernistic writers as well as of the writers of the seventeenth century, like the works that draw attention to their own status as fiction. One categorisation may be made, though, with certainty; namely that Dylan was in constant opposition to the Pylon school.